

Christ's Finished Work

I Peter 3:18-22

- I. Christ suffered for our sins
 - a. Note the word "also" (I Peter 3:18; cf. 2:21). We suffer, but Christ also suffered. Isaiah 53:3 says He is "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."
 - b. Hebrews 4:15 says the Lord Jesus Christ is our great high priest, and is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."
 - c. Though Peter used the suffering of Christ as an encouragement and strength to his afflicted readers, we must remember that Peter also set Jesus completely apart from all others in his suffering
 - d. Our suffering is corrective, Christ's suffering was redemptive. An atonement for our sins
 - e. For Christ also suffered once for sins: Jesus suffered once for sins. There is no longer any sacrifice or atonement that can please God other than what Jesus provided at the cross. Even our own suffering won't pay for our sins. The price has already been paid.
 - f. Penal, substitutionary atonement- The just, for the unjust- I was lost in my sin, but Christ took my punishment on the cross, and I trusted in Him for my salvation- now I am declared innocent and righteous before God!
 - g. Since Jesus did all this to bring us to God, how wrong it is for us to not come to God in fellowship! The ancient Greek word translated "bring" is the same word used for access in Romans 5:2 and Ephesians 2:18.
 - h. Here, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. It also tells us that the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 6:4), and it says that Jesus raised Himself from the dead (John 2:18-22). The resurrection was the work of the Triune God.
- II. Christ's message to the imprisoned- v. 19

- a. This is one of the most difficult passages in scripture to understand
- b. There are several views which good men disagree over, and there is some heresy taught using this scripture as well.
- c. He went and preached to the spirits in prison: Apparently this work was done in the period after Jesus' death but before His first resurrection appearance to the disciples. Jesus went to Hades – the abode of the dead – and preached to the spirits there.
- d. Some teach that Christ had to suffer some more in Hell- I think that is dangerous error
- e. Some also believe that this refers to the spirit of Christ preaching through Noah the warning of judgment.
- f. Some have regarded these spirits as human spirits, but it is more likely that they were demonic spirits. We know that their disobedience was in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:20). If you hold to the "Sons of God are angels"- view, than you might use as evidence that these were spirits who were punished for their sin of ungodly mingling of humans and demons (Genesis 6:1-2)
- g. Preached to the spirits in prison: We also don't know exactly why Jesus preached to these imprisoned spirits. In all probability this was preaching (the proclamation of God's message), but it was not evangelism (the proclamation of good news). Jesus preached a message of judgment and final condemnation in light of His finished work on the cross to these disobedient spirits.
- h. In doing this, Jesus was able to proclaim complete triumph, victory, and lordship over evil. Philippians 2:10 says, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" Colossians 2:15- illustr final mortgage payment
- i. I do not believe that Christ preached the gospel, giving these spirits a "second chance." This was a pronouncement of triumph over evil.
- j. Why only those disobedient in the days of Noah are mentioned is not stated. What the purpose or result of Christ's preaching was, is not revealed. We can

form our conclusions, but we cannot be overly dogmatic about what the Bible is describing here.

- k. Paul says about Christ, “when he ascended on high, he took many captives” (Ephesians 4:8). You could say that Christ “led a host of captives.” The reference could be that, in paradise, Jesus gathered all the redeemed who were there and took them to their permanent dwelling in heaven.
 - i. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word used to describe the realm of the dead is sheol. It simply means “the place of the dead” or “the place of departed souls/spirits.” The New Testament Greek equivalent of sheol is hades, which also refers to “the place of the dead.”
 - ii. Sheol/hades was a realm with two divisions—a place of blessing and a place of judgment- Luke 16:23
 - iii. The abodes of the saved and the lost are both generally called “hades” in the Bible. The abode of the saved is also called “Abraham’s bosom” in Luke 16:22 and “paradise” in Luke 23:43.
 - l. All this to say, the Bible isn’t entirely clear what exactly Christ did for the three days between His death and resurrection. From what we can tell, though, He comforted the departed saints and brought them to their eternal home, and He proclaimed His victory over the fallen angels who are kept in prison. What we can know for sure is that Jesus was not giving anyone a second chance for salvation; we face judgment after death (Hebrews 9:27), not a second chance. Also, He was not suffering in hell; His work of redemption was finished on the cross
- III. Christ ascended into Heaven- v. 20-22
- a. The days of Noah are referred to throughout Scripture as a warning to sinners not to ignore the righteous judgment of God (cf. II Peter 2:5; 3:5, 6).
 - b. Our Lord said, "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37).

- c. Hebrews 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."
- d. Noah's ark is a "figure" or a type of salvation (I Peter 3:21). Those in the ark were saved. The water did not save them. Being in the ark (a picture of Christ) saved them
- e. Baptism is a picture (or a "figure" -- I Peter 3:21) of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:1-6).
- f. Baptism does not save, just like the water did not save- the ark did.
- g. Baptism is about identification with Christ's work on the cross. See Luke 12:50
- h. We are in union with Christ
- i. We see the completeness of Jesus' work by His exaltation to the right hand of God the Father, and the subjection of all created spirits unto Him (angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him)

Conclusion:

- Christ suffered once, for all
- We can never take away or add to what He's done – we simply believe!
- He is now in glorified, and seated in a place of authority and power. May He have the same place in our hearts!